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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **High-School Test Scores Remain Steady in English, Mathematics**

The 2007 High-School test scores in English language arts and mathematics were virtually unchanged from previous years, according to results released today (September 26<sup>th</sup>) by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE).

The results from the New Standards Reference Exam (NSRE), administered last March to all 11<sup>th</sup> graders, showed 43.3 percent proficient in mathematics (up 0.5 percentage points from last year) and 53.3 percent proficient in English language arts (down 0.7 points).

Scores in the urban districts (Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket) trail the statewide average but showed improvement, with 37.1 percent proficient in English (up 0.3 points) and 24.9 percent proficient in mathematics (up 1.4 points).

“The good news is that our high-school test scores have remained relatively steady,” Governor Donald L. Carcieri said. “The bad news is that remaining steady isn’t good enough for our children or our state.

“Over the last five years, I have worked with the Department of Education and with the Board of Regents to adopt reforms that will significantly improve Rhode Island’s elementary and secondary education system,” Carcieri continued. “While implementing these reforms takes time, many are now coming on line.

“This year, for instance, juniors will be the first class to participate in the new assessments that are linked to state standards and seniors will be the first to graduate under the new diploma system, which will require them to show what they know – through senior projects and portfolios of work,” the Governor said. “These two reforms alone should make a real difference in the quality of education being provided in Rhode Island’s high schools.”

“As the new Chairman of the Board of Regents, I believe that these test results are unacceptable,” said Robert G. Flanders, Jr., Esq., Chairman of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education. “The Regents’ High-School Reform Initiative has positioned our students to do better on the new state assessments, but we clearly have to redouble our efforts to close the gaps that these test results reveal.”

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“The NAEP test results that the U.S. Department of Education released earlier this week showed that Rhode Island students are making significant progress in mathematics and some progress in reading in elementary and middle schools, with particular gains among those students who have historically been underserved,” said Peter McWalters, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. “The challenge before us, now that we have aligned our testing and instruction systems, is to bring the same or better degree of progress to our high schools. I am confident that we can work together to bring all students in Rhode Island to proficiency.”

This marks the last administration in the state of the NSRE, which has been in use in Rhode Island for ten years. Next month, high-school students (grade 11) will take the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) tests, which Rhode Island developed in partnership with New Hampshire and Vermont. Students in elementary and middle schools have been taking NECAP tests for the past two years.

*Note:*

*Test results by school and by district will be posted on the RIDE Web site tomorrow (September 27<sup>th</sup>).*

*Commissioner McWalters will be available for comment tomorrow on the high-school test results.*

